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ABSTRACT

Ancient times comes to life when a student can hold in his/her hand or read about an artifact, such as a coin of the Greek or Roman era. Students are familiar with coins, and this commonality helps them understand the similarities and differences between their lives and times in ancient Greece or Rome. Many symbols on the ancient coins can be found on U.S. coins. Students study the history and myths of the ancient periods, and relate them to modern people and places. This unit of study incorporates all curricular subject areas. The unit consists of four lesson plans: (1) "Symbols on Coins: U.S. Coins Evolved from Ancient Times"; (2) "All Coins Lead to Rome: Roman Symbols That Can Be Found on U.S. Coins"; (3) "Ancient Myths Retold"; and (4) "Ancient Story Problems." The unit provides a description of the unit, keywords, appropriate grade level, subject areas, a question or problem, a unit introduction, and a culminating activity. Each lesson presents subject areas, duration of lesson, keywords, brief description, national standards, learning objectives, materials list, procedures, assessment/evaluation, and differentiated learning options. (BT)

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Ancient and Modern Coins Unit Plans

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Unit Plans

Ancient and Modern Coins

Description of Unit:

How often do children let their imaginations wander to adventures and far away times? These moments in a child's life and more can occur through the study of Greek and Roman mythology and history. These ancient times can really come to life when you can hold in your hand or read about common artifacts from this time like a coin. Students are very familiar with money (coins) and this commonality can help them understand how their life is similar or different to times in ancient Greece or Rome. Many symbols on the ancient coins can be found on U.S. coins. Students can study the history and myths of these periods, and when they relate them to modern people and places their lessons become even more real. This unit incorporates all curricular subject areas and uses coins to help students explore ancient times, and to relate their research to their own life.

Keywords:

- Ancient Coins
- Coin History
- Coins
- Greece
- Greek Coins
- History
- Informational Texts
- Mythology
- Roman Coins
- Rome
- Story Problems
- Symbols
- U.S. Coins
- Writing
- Writing Across the Curriculum

Grade Level(s): 3-5, 6-8

Main Subject Area: Social Studies

Additional Subjects:

- Art
- Language Arts
- Mathematics
- Science
- Technology

Approximate Length of Time:

Essential Question or Problem:

What are the similarities and differences between my life and life during ancient Rome or Greece? Can I find this out by looking at coins from ancient Greece and Rome?

Unit Introduction:

To start this unit it would be best to pass around some replicas (fakes) of ancient coins. If this is not possible, you can print out copies from the Internet or books listed in the references for each lesson. Tell the students that 1,600 to 1,800 years ago, Roman citizens were carrying these around in their pouches to spend. Have the student think about what they might have bought with these coins and how many had been made (200 million to 500 million per year estimated at peak Constantinian times). If you have actual coins then students can speculate how the coins could have lasted so long and what might have happened to them in all these years.

Individual Lessons:

1. Symbols on Coins: U.S. Coins Evolved from Ancient Times
2. All "Coins" Lead To Rome: Roman symbols that can be found on U.S. coins
3. Ancient Myths Retold
4. Ancient Story Problems

Culminating Activity:

Students have just finished learning about ancient times through coins. A great culminating activity would be for each student to create a coin, which would represent them and their life, for someone in the future to discover. Students could brainstorm how they could make these coins so they could be preserved for someone in the future to examine and learn about them. Students might make a time capsule with their coins or put pictures of them on a web page.

Lesson Plans

Symbols on Coins: U.S. Coins Evolved from Ancient Times

Main Subject Area: Social Studies

Additional Subjects: Art

Duration of Lesson: 90 minutes

Keywords:

- Ancient Coins
- Coin History
- Coins
- Greece
- History
- Rome
- Symbols
- U.S. Coins

Brief Description:

Students will learn about the evolution of coins, and will create their own coin, using the various features that have been carried over into modern times.

National Standard(s):

- Time, Continuity, and Change
- People, Places, and Environment

Additional Subject Area Standard(s):

Objectives:

Students will learn about the evolution of coins and the different features we see today on coins such as symbols, mint marks and portraits.

Students will create their own coin, which will include a portrait and symbols on the obverse and reverse, the edging, the mintmark and date.

Materials (online):

Access to a computer that has connection to the Internet.

The U.S. Mint's H.I.P. Pocket Change(TM) Web site - http://www.usmint.gov/kids

Materials (offline):

Art supplies: Modeling clay, clay tools or pencils, clay flattening devices (rolling pins, empty juice bottles, hard plastic glasses), drawing paper

Handouts with images of ancient coins and currently circulating U.S. coins

Possible Books to use:

"A Look Inside the U.S. Mint" Cobblestone. September, 1985.

Grant, Michael. Roman History From Coins. New York: Barnes and Noble Books, 1995.

Harper, David C., editor. North American Coins and Prices 9th edition. New York: Krause Publications, 2001.

Klawans, Zander. Handbook of Ancient Greek and Roman Coins. Racine, Wisconsin: Western Publishing, Co., 1995.

Krause, Barry. Collecting Coins for Pleasure and Profit. White Hall, Va.: Betterway Publications, 1991.

Lindheim, Leon. Facts and Fictions about Coins – an uncommon guidebook to the wonderful world of numismatics Cleveland, Ohio: World Publishing Co., 1967.

Official 2001 Blackbook Price Guide to United States Coins. Random House, Inc., 2000.

Reinfeld, Fred. How to Build A Coin Collection. New York: Sterling Publishing, Co., 1971.

Schwarz, Ted. Coins as Living History. New York: Arco Publishing Inc., 1976.

Sutherland, Carol H.V. Art In Coinage. New York: Philosophical Library, Inc., 1956.

Yeoman, R.S. A Guidebook of United States Coins, 53rd edition, 2001. Racine, Wisconsin, 2000.

Coins Used in Lesson:

All current circulating U.S. coins

Grade Level(s): 3-5 6-8

Procedures (online):

Research and find information on the history and evolution of coins using the suggested reading materials and the U.S. Mint H.I.P. Pocket Change(TM) Web site.

Procedures (offline):

1. Introduce the activity by displaying a penny (or a large paper replica of a penny) for the whole class to see. Ask your students what it is, and what we use it for. Explain to your students that if they look closer at coins, they will see that each one is a piece of artwork that tells us about a country's culture.

2. Distribute handouts with images of ancient and currently circulating U.S. coins, and discuss some of the history and evolution of coins by using the points of information listed below.

3. Discuss some of the similarities between the ancient coins and the circulating coins.

4. Tell your students that they will be creating their own coin to represent an aspect of our culture that they feel is important. Discuss possible coin topics as a class.

5. Have your student create sketches of the front (obverse) and back (reverse) of the proposed coin. The coin sketches should include a portrait and date on the front, a legend and symbol on the back, along with a denominational amount.

6. Give each student a 2" square chunk of modeling clay and a blank piece of paper. Each student will create a planchet ("coin" shaped model) by flattening the clay and then pressing down with an upside down glass.

7. Students can write a description of their coin including rational for the symbol they used.

Assessment / Evaluation:

Teachers can assess the coins and descriptions with rational created by the students.

Differentiated Learning Options:

When comparing ancient coins to modern coins with your class, you could also have your students examine modern foreign coins to see if they too use symbols to represent their culture or their history.

Lesson Plans

All "Coins" Lead To Rome: Roman symbols that can be found on U.S. coins

Main Subject Area: Social Studies

Additional Subjects: Art, Language Arts, Science

Duration of Lesson: 90 minutes

Keywords:

- Ancient Coins
- Coins
- Greece
- History
- Rome
- Symbols
- U.S. Coins

Brief Description:

Students will compare and contrast modern U.S. coins to those of ancient times, by looking at various coins on hand and through research in coin books that have been collected in the classroom.

National Standard(s):

- Time, Continuity, and Change
- People, Places, and Environment

Additional Subject Area Standard(s):

- Demonstrate competence in the general skills and strategies for reading a variety of informational texts
- Demonstrate competence in the general skills and strategies of the writing process
- Physical science
- Science as inquiry

- Use grammatical and mechanical conventions in written compositions

Objectives:

Students will compare and contrast modern U.S. coins to those of ancient times, especially Greece and Rome, by looking at various coins on hand and through research in coin books that have been collected in the classroom.

Students will observe carefully the various features of a coin including the portraits and symbols on the obverse and reverse, the edging, the metal(s) used, the diameter, the mintmark, and date. They will use these observations to classify and sort coins.

Materials (online):

Access to a computer classroom that has connection to the Internet.

The U.S. Mint H.I.P. Pocket Change Web site - http://www.usmint.gov/kids

Materials (offline):

Handouts with images of ancient coins and currently circulating U.S. coins

Reference Materials:

"A Look Inside the U.S. Mint" Cobblestone. September, 1985.

Grant, Michael. Roman History From Coins. New York: Barnes and Noble Books, 1995.

Harper, David C., editor. North American Coins and Prices 9th edition. New York: Krause Publications, 2001.

Klawans, Zander. Handbook of Ancient Greek and Roman Coins. Racine, Wisconsin: Western Publishing, Co., 1995.

Krause, Barry. Collecting Coins for Pleasure and Profit. White Hall, Va.: Betterway Publications, 1991.

Lindheim, Leon. Facts and Fictions about Coins – an uncommon guidebook to the wonderful world of numismatics Cleveland, Ohio: World Publishing Co., 1967.

Official 2001 Blackbook Price Guide to United States Coins. Random House, Inc., 2000.

Reinfeld, Fred. How to Build A Coin Collection. New York: Sterling Publishing, Co., 1971.

Schwarz, Ted. Coins as Living History. New York: Arco Publishing Inc., 1976.

Sutherland, Carol H.V. Art In Coinage. New York: Philosophical Library, Inc., 1956.

Yeoman, R.S. A Guidebook of United States Coins, 53rd edition, 2001. Racine, Wisconsin, 2000.

Coins Used in Lesson:

All current circulating U.S. coins - You should have enough coins for each student in your class to have one.

Grade Level(s): 3-5 6-8

Procedures (online):

Use the Internet to gather reference materials for your students relating to U.S. coins as well as Ancient Roman and Greek coins and symbols. (See step 1 of the offline procedures)

Procedures (offline):

1. Gather together many different types of U.S. coins of various denominations and types. Also obtain U.S. coin books from the library, materials from the U.S. Mint, or a coin dealer. Discuss some interesting points about Ancient Rome and Greece as well as points about symbols on coins with your students.

2. Break students into groups. In groups they should brainstorm all the ways they can classify the coins. What symbols are on the coin? What phrases are on the coin, and what do they mean for America? Who or what is on the obverse and reverse? What can you find out about the person or place or objects? What symbols may have been associated with Ancient Rome and Greece ? (Have students look at their handouts and see what images were actually used on ancient coins)

3. As a class, decide on the different categories that can be used to classify all of the coins. Examples include mint mark, date, symbols, etc.

4. Give each student his or her own coin. Have the students write as many observations as they can about their coin. Student can use the categories

they agreed on as a class to classify their coin.

5. Students should then get back into their groups and put all of their coins in the middle of the table.

6. Have students exchange descriptions within their group and see if their coin can be picked from their group based on the description they wrote.

Assessment / Evaluation:

Teachers can assess the coin descriptions created by the students. Other students can also comment on the writing when they exchange descriptions and try to find the correct coin.

Differentiated Learning Options:

The new state quarters have symbols on the reverse that are important to each state. Research why a state committee selected those symbols to represent the state. The U.S. Mint has a Fifty States Quarters Program that provides free educational materials on the state quarters. Much of the state quarter information is also available at the U.S. Mint H.I.P. Pocket Change(TM)Web site.

Lesson Plans

Ancient Myths Retold

Main Subject Area: Language Arts

Additional Subjects: Social Studies

Duration of Lesson: 90 minutes

Keywords:

- Coin History
- Coins
- Greece
- Greek Coins
- Informational Texts
- Mythology
- Roman Coins
- Rome
- U.S. Coins
- Writing
- Writing Across the Curriculum

Brief Description:

Students will be introduced to mythology and will create modern versions of ancient myths based on figures represented on modern U.S. coins.

National Standard(s):

- Demonstrate competence in the stylistic and rhetorical aspects of writing
- Use grammatical and mechanical conventions in written compositions

Additional Subject Area Standard(s):

- People, Places, and Environment
- Time, Continuity, and Change

Objectives:

Students will be introduced to mythology and gain an understanding of this literary form.

Students will create a modern version of an ancient myth based on figures represented on modern U.S. coins.

Materials (online):

Access to a computer that has connection to the Internet.

Legends on Roman Coins -
http://www.math.montana.edu/~umsfwest/numis/legends.html

Materials (offline):

Pencils

Paper

Possible Books to use:

D'Aulaire, Ingri and Edgar, Book of Greek Myths, Garden City: Doubleday and Company Inc. 1962.

Grant, Michael. Roman History From Coins. New York: Barnes and Noble Books, 1995.

Hamilton Edith, Mythology: Timeless Tales of Gods and Heroes. New York: Mentor, 1942.

Harper, David C., editor. North American Coins and Prices 9th edition. New York: Krause Publications, 2001.

Klawans, Zander. Handbook of Ancient Greek and Roman Coins. Racine, Wisconsin: Western Publishing, Co., 1995.

Official 2001 Blackbook Price Guide to United States Coins. Random House, Inc., 2000.

Schwarz, Ted. Coins as Living History. New York: Arco Publishing Inc., 1976.

Sutherland, Carol H.V. Art In Coinage. New York: Philosophical Library, Inc., 1956.

Yeoman, R.S. A Guidebook of United States Coins, 53rd edition, 2001.

Racine, Wisconsin, 2000.

Coins Used in Lesson:

All current U.S. circulating coins

Grade Level(s): 3-5 6-8

Procedures (online):

Use the Internet to research information about Greek and Roman Myths.

Procedures (offline):

1. Students need to become familiar with ancient Greek or Roman myths. If students have already studied myths, then you can review several stories with them, and brainstorm a list of myths they are familiar with. If mythology is new to them, it is best to focus on just 2 or 3 stories so they can understand the main elements in ancient myths. Help students to recognize symbols and people in myths and what these symbols and people represent.

2. Have students brainstorm a list of symbols and people on modern U.S. coins. You could do this first in groups and give each group a set of circulating coins. There are many symbols on coins and if students get a chance to look at the coins they will find many more than they realized. The new state quarters have many new symbols and figures.

3. Direct your students to research a bit about the symbols on their coins, so they can find correlations between ancient symbols and ones used today.

4. Have each student pick an ancient myth to retell using symbols and figures on modern coins. If mythology is new then the class can retell the same myth but use different symbols and figures. Thomas Jefferson could become Hercules or Lady Liberty could become Athena.

5. Have the students write their retelling of the myth and have them underline or highlight the modern symbol or person used in their story. They can illustrate their myth with drawings of the symbols and people they used.

Assessment / Evaluation:

Teachers can assess the student's writing based on literary elements in myths and mechanical conventions.

Differentiated Learning Options:

Students could create a coin with one side being the symbols and characters from the ancient myth and the other side being the symbols and characters of their retelling of the myth.

Lesson Plans

Ancient Story Problems

Main Subject Area: Mathematics

Additional Subjects: Social Studies

Duration of Lesson: 90 minutes

Keywords:

- Coin History
- Coins
- Greece
- Greek Coins
- Roman Coins
- Rome
- Story Problems
- Writing

Brief Description:

Students will research ancient civilizations, and develop story problems using symbols and coins from those times. Students will then retell these story problems using modern terms and coins.

National Standard(s):

- Number and Operations
- Problem Solving
- Communication

Additional Subject Area Standard(s):

- People, Places, and Environment
- Time, Continuity, and Change

Objectives:

Students will create their own story problems based on people, symbols and

coins from ancient Greek and Roman times. Students will retell these story problems using modern terms and coins.

Students will learn about the history of ancient Rome and Greece.

Materials (online):

Access to a computer classroom that has connection to the Internet.

Ancient Roman and Greek coins FAQs - http://www.math.montana.edu/~umsfwest/numis/index.html

Roman History, Coins and Technology - http://myron.sjsu.edu/index.htm

An overview of ancient coins - http://www.ancientcoinmarket.com/ds/overview/begin4.html

Materials (offline):

Pencils

Paper

Possible Books to use:

Grant, Michael. Roman History From Coins. New York: Barnes and Noble Books, 1995.

Harper, David C., editor. North American Coins and Prices 9th edition. New York: Krause Publications, 2001.

Klawans, Zander. Handbook of Ancient Greek and Roman Coins. Racine, Wisconsin: Western Publishing, Co., 1995.

Lindheim, Leon. Facts and Fictions about Coins – an uncommon guidebook to the wonderful world of numismatics Cleveland, Ohio: World Publishing Co., 1967.

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Schwarz, Ted. Coins as Living History. New York: Arco Publishing Inc., 1976.

Sutherland, Carol H.V. Art In Coinage. New York: Philosophical Library, Inc.,

1956.

Coins Used in Lesson:

Ancient Greek and Roman coins

All current circulating U.S. coins

Grade Level(s): 3-5 6-8

Procedures (online):

Students first need to do some research on the coins and times of ancient Rome and Greece.

Procedures (offline):

1. Students can work in groups to use the internet sites or books in the Materials/Resources list to come up with a list of coins and items they can use in their story problems.

2. Each group should write their ideas on butcher paper and post them around the room to share with other groups.

3. Each student will need to write a story problem using ancient Greek or Roman coins and settings. You can give the students guidelines (grading rubric) for which mathematical operations should be used in their problems and how many steps their problems should include.

4. For each ancient story problem they write, the student will write a modern story problem. See example below:

A Roman laborer made one Denarius per day. A Denarius could purchase - 25 pounds of bread or 10 pounds of olive oil. How many days would the laborer need to work to buy 30 pounds of oil? If he eats 2 pounds of bread per day, how many days does he have to work to buy bread for 50 days?

A modern day worker makes $50 a day. If a loaf of bread costs $0.99 then how many loaves can he buy after working one day? How much change would he have left over?

Assessment / Evaluation:

The students will be evaluated on their story problems. A rubric can be set up and presented to the students before they begin. The rubric can include number of steps, types of mathematical operations, and strategies for solving

the problem.

Differentiated Learning Options:

Students could create harder (multi-step) problems for enrichment. Story problems can be sent to another class at the same level via email for other students to solve. Students with a learning disability can use manipulatives to help them plan out their story problem, or they can also draw out the problem instead of writing it.

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